

California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
North Coast Region

Order No. 98-34  
I.D. No. 1B710110SON

Requiring the Sonoma County Water Agency to  
Cease and Desist from Discharging Waste contrary to  
Requirements Prescribed by the  
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Sonoma County

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region (hereinafter the Regional Water Board), finds that:

1. The Sonoma County Water Agency owns and operates the County Service Area #6, Sea Ranch Central Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Facilities. Treated wastewater generated at the Sea Ranch Central Wastewater Treatment Plant is discharged via spray irrigation to pasture land adjacent to the treatment plant.
2. On March 28, 1996 the Regional Water Board adopted Order No. 96-11, Waste Discharge Requirements for the Sonoma County Water Agency, County Service Area #6, Sea Ranch Central Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Facilities. Order No. 96-11 includes Discharge Prohibition A.4 which reads as follows: AThe discharge of waste to the Pacific Ocean or its tributaries is prohibited.≡
3. From January 23, 1998 through January 27, 1998 treated wastewater from the Sea Ranch Central Wastewater Treatment Plant was discharged to an unnamed tributary to the Pacific Ocean in violation of waste discharge requirements. The discharge resulted from spray irrigation runoff due to saturated spray field conditions. The irrigation was necessary to prevent the storage pond at the Sea Ranch Central Wastewater Treatment Plant from overflowing. It appears that a major factor that contributed to the violation was excessive infiltration/inflow into the Sea Ranch Central wastewater collection system which resulted in accelerated filling of the treated wastewater storage pond. The estimated volume of treated wastewater discharged was one million gallons. Such discharges threaten to continue unless corrective actions are taken.
4. Pursuant to Section 15321, Title 14, California Code of Regulations, this is an action to enforce waste discharge requirements for the protection of the environment and as such is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq).
5. On March 26, 1998 after due notice to the discharger and all other affected persons, the Regional Water Board conducted a public hearing and evidence was received regarding this Cease and Desist Order.

THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Sonoma County Water Agency shall cease discharges and threatened discharges of waste contrary to waste discharge requirements in accordance with the following time schedule.

1. On or before April 30, 1998, submit to the Regional Water Board a report that details what efforts have been undertaken to determine the cause of the violation. This report shall include a description of the corrective actions that could be implemented to prevent future violations.
2. On or before June 30, 1998 submit to the Regional Water Board a detailed time schedule for implementation of the corrective actions that will be taken to prevent future violations.
3. Upon approval by the Executive Officer, implement the corrective actions in accordance with the detailed time schedule.

### **Certification**

I, Lee A. Michlin, Executive Officer, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of an Order adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region, on March 26, 1998.

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Lee A. Michlin  
Executive Officer